

National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap

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Indian culture is unique in the world. This country is known more by its cultural history than geography. It is imperative to understand and preserve the threads of India's art and cultural heritage. However, the official boasting about India being a cultural powerhouse rapidly disintegrates when one examines facts.

In news: Losing the way with a map

Placing it in syllabus: History

Dimensions

- What is the Mission?
- Objectives of the Mission
- Importance
- Hurdles and reasons for failure
- Suggestions

Content:

What is the Mission?

- National Mission on Cultural Mapping is a mission mode project of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- It is aimed to address the necessity of preserving the threads of rich Indian Art and Cultural Heritage, convert vast and widespread cultural canvas of India into an objective Cultural Mapping while creating a strong "Cultural Vibrancy" throughout the nation.
- It can create a database that anybody can plug into, thus becoming a resource for the media, researchers and funders.
- Born in 2015, the National Mission on Cultural Mapping

was created with an outlay of ₹3,000 crore

- It will identify, collect and record cultural assets and resources. It correlates this to planning and strategizing.
- A portal and a database listing organisations, spaces, facilities, festivals and events will be created.
- This database can be used to preserve culture and provide or ameliorate livelihoods.

Objectives of the Mission:

Under this Mission, at broad-level, there are three important objectives as follows:

- **National Cultural Awareness Abhiyan:** Hamari Sanskriti Hamari Pahchan Abhiyan (Our Culture Our Identity)
- **Nationwide Artist Talent Hunt/Scouting Programme:** Sanskritik Pratibha Khoj Abhiyan
- **National Cultural Workplace:** Centralised Transactional Web Portal with database and demography of cultural assets and resources including all art forms and artists.

In other words, the objectives of the mission is:

- To envision and address the necessity of preserving the threads of rich Indian Art and Cultural Heritage.
- To Convert vast and widespread cultural canvass of India into an objective Cultural Mapping.
- To Design a mechanism to fulfill the aspirations of the whole artist community of the nation.
- To Preserve the rich cultural heritage of this country for future generations.
- To create a strong “cultural vibrancy” throughout the nation.

Importance:

Revival and safeguarding of oral traditions:

- Oral traditions usually are not a profession but a part of people's lives and traditional knowledge (for example local medicinal practices) do not come under any practicing art form.
- To find methods and set processes so that their practitioners are recognised and these art forms/oral traditions are passed on, as many of these are also dying practices.
- Art of "Musical instruments-making", costumes and make-up (for e.g. Kathakali), mask-making (e.g. for Chhau), cooking etc. also counted under art forms.

Fostering Cultural Awareness:

- Awareness about the long standing heritage and rich culture of this country is reducing day by day resulting in (i) weak linkage between cultural legacy and our day to day life and (ii) feeble binding force within the society.
- Cultural heritage and legacy is connected to the livelihood of the artists' community also.

Cultural Preservation:

- The huge cultural footprint of the country is currently fragmented and narrowed down to the individual aspirations like State, language, cast urban/rural, etc.
- Many arts forms are becoming extinct because of non-existence/channelisation of resources for the promotion of arts and culture.

Sustainable Employment:

- Culture & Creative Industries employs 45-48% and all other industries together employ around 17-20% of the total workforce.
- Main challenge in the growth and promotion of cultural industries lies in developing a revenue-generation model which could be self-sustainable.

Optimal Resource Allocation and Utilization:

- There is no centralised comprehensive cultural mapping data of the country and whatever database of artistes is available that is totally based on personal contacts etc.
- In the absence of comprehensive data, the resource utilisation is non-optimal and outcome is dismal.
- There is no relationship between processes for cultural development and the grant allocation for the same.
- There is a need to change policy for ensuring optimal utilisation of scarce government resources.

Objective Database for inclusive growth of cultural heritage:

- There are various schemes /programmes which are not linked with the objective database for inclusive growth of the national cultural heritage.
- The process of government grants is based on the application called or proposal received and not supported by any objective database information which results in missing rational approach while processing the proposal of various grants.
- Government funds and resources are not allotted in a way which is conducive for integration of cultural policy with tourism.

Hurdles and reasons for failure:

Budgetary Delays:

- The Mission, created with an outlay of ₹3,000 crore, was not officially approved until 2017.
- In 2018-19 and 2019-20, only ₹42.78 crore was allocated, of which ₹1.17 crore has been utilised.

Pandemic-time Budget Cuts:

- An online resource for arts and culture, Sahapedia, recently ran the budget numbers for the Ministry of

Culture (MoC) and the figures are appalling.

- While allocations for culture have been marginal at best over the last decade, they have declined in the last five years, now standing at a mere 0.07% of the Budget.
- When the pandemic struck last year, instead of helping beleaguered artists and artisans, the government slashed culture funding by a further 21%.
- Contrast this to countries like China, Singapore, Australia and the U.K., which increased allocations, besides announcing billion-dollar relief packages.

Inefficient Fund Usage:

- Additionally, the government's cultural institutions are plagued by vacancies (ranging from 30% to 70%) and lack of trained manpower.
- This means fund usage has invariably been random and ill-planned.

Absence of IT Infrastructure:

- The exercise was supposed to begin by identifying artists at the block level, but this was abandoned as there was no IT infrastructure, ironic when the government has an app for everything.

Suggestions:

- Objectives of the mission need to be streamlined
- A cultural map could be a vital tool in the bedlam that reigns the space, and the idea cannot be abandoned because many bureaucrats and ministers don't understand its meaning or scope.
- Even this blueprint can help unravel the MoC's budgetary challenges, provided its irrelevancies, absurdities and overreach are removed, and the focus kept on a deeper survey and understanding of the diversity of the cultural base, without caste, communal and regional hierarchies.

- To be a cultural leader, official India must look at its own face in a clearer mirror.

Mould your thought: What is the National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap? What are the reasons for its apparent failure?

Approach to the answer:

- Introduction
- Discuss the objectives and aims of the mission
- Discuss the its importance
- Mention the reasons for the slow pace of the mission
- Suggest measures to correct the situation
- Conclusion